

## WIDLINGS

### HARDSHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURE



#### **Policy Statement**

Wildlings wishes to be an inclusive setting, where no child or family miss out on the opportunities we offer based on their financial circumstances. All evidence towards outcomes for children points towards a quality early years experience having an impact on their life opportunities and future development, and it is our mission to ensure that we are accessible to all. While our fees must reflect the cost of running our setting, we want to be able to offer support to those who need it. Should any family find themselves in extreme financial difficulties, and would be unable to continue at Wildlings because of this, we urge you to contact us so we can make arrangements to remain affordable and for your child's early years setting to remain with us.

#### **Hardship Fund Criteria**

- We have no set criteria for access to our hardship fund, all circumstances are assessed on an individual basis
- The Manager and Committee will decide each case on an individual basis and support will be customised
- Children classed as disadvantaged by definition below are supported to join Wildlings on an individual basis

The Department for Education identifies disadvantaged pupils as:

- Eligible for Two Year Funding
- Looked After Children (LAC), or those who have previously looked after by the state, but are now adopted or are subject to a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order or a residence order
- Children with parents in the armed forces.

It is assumed that these children are disadvantaged in comparison to others because of low family income, little or no family support (LAC) or lots of setting moves all of which have been proven to have a negative impact on progress and attainment when compared to others. Wildlings also includes children who are refugees in the category of disadvantaged pupils.

Families may find themselves in extreme financial difficulties due to unexpected circumstances such as job loss, death or loss of a family member, sickness or poor health and low income, all of the above and more are considered when applying for support.

#### **Hardship Fund Procedure**

- A parent/carer should contact the Manager as soon as possible should they find themselves in difficult financial circumstances. The Manager and setting remain supportive and non judgemental towards each family and an open door policy is in place to enable sensitive discussions to be had

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- The Manager and parent/carer will spend time discussing the circumstances and at what point the family need support (such as fees, resources and kit, food items, or anything else that is considered essential for the families welfare)
- The Manager will discuss the above with the Committee within an appropriate time frame, depending on the urgency of the need. If a very rapid action is required, the manager may make the decision as to what support can be offered with the Chair of committee alone.
- The family will be notified by email to confirm the support offered by Wildlings
- The agreement will be reviewed each term
- The Manager and Committee reserve the right to cancel or amend the hardship support at any time with a one week notice period

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Reviewed and amended: June 2022